DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 271 697 CG 019 236

TITLE	Six Steps to Successful Interviewing. How To Build Your Reputation by Picking the Winners.
INSTITUTION	College Placement Council, Bethlehem, Pa.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-913936-19-7
PUB DATE	86
NOTE	84p.
AVAILABLE FROM	College Placement Council, 62 Highland Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18017.
PUB TYPE	Guides - General (050)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Employment Interviews; Evaluation Criteria; *Questioning Techniques; *Skill Development
IDENTIFIERS	*Interviewers

ABSTRACT

An in-depth examination of the employment interview process is described in this document. The stated purpose of this manual is to help the interviewer understand his responsibilities, minimize interviewing mistakes, learn a systematic interview format, develop questioning techniques, design relevant and legal questions, and evaluate candidates accurately. The first chapter describes interviewer responsibilities and mistakes. Interview format, reviewing a resume, and the steps of an interview are described in the second chapter. The three basic questioning techniques (open, mid-range, and narrow), how to choose a technique, what to ask, and legal issues related to interviewing are discussed in the third chapter. Included in this chapter is a list of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission offices and training exercises on questioning. Tips on evaluating the candidate and completing the evaluation form are given, and a sample evaluation form is included in the fourth chapter. The final chapter discusses methods of reducing selection errors and contains an interview self-checklist. A 33-item interviewing bibliography is included. (ABL)

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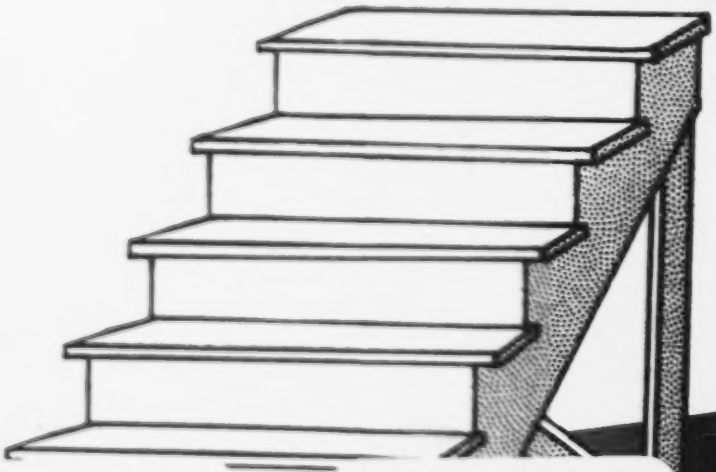
SIX STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

How to Build Your Reputation by Picking the Winners

CG 019236



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1
Getting Started

The key element that can make or break any business is the people it employs. That's why the hiring process is so important. But, hiring the right people is not an easy task. It takes time, money, and reliable selection methods.

One widely used method for selecting employees is the interview. The interview is a two-way dialogue between the interviewer and the candidate. The goal of the interviewer is to assess the candidate's skills and abilities in terms of the job requirements and to sell the company if the candidate is qualified. Similarly, the goal of candidates is to assess the position in terms of their interests, skills, and abilities and to articulate their competencies.

The campus interview is a 30-minute screening interview that focuses on the candidate's background and experiences. During this brief interval, the interviewer is under pressure to identify past behavior that might predict success or failure on the job. Unfortunately, not every interviewer is capable of extracting the type of information from a candidate which might predict success or failure on the job. Due to a mismatch of candidates to jobs, many companies have had to deal with high turnover, development of special training

programs to overcome skill deficiencies, and low employee productivity. Some companies have even faced legal suits when Equal Employment Opportunity Guidelines have been violated.

How does an organization insure that its recruiters can identify qualified candidates? Whether the interviewer is a full-time college recruiter, a personnel officer, or a line manager, certain personality traits, background and knowledge, and skills are needed.

Interviewer Qualities		
Personality Traits	Background and Knowledge	Skills
Outgoing Enthusiastic Objective	Appropriate Education Length of Employment with Company Knowledge of Company Knowledge of Job Opening	Analytical Communication Organization Decision-Making

Having these qualities will enable interviewers to do a more effective job. However, not every interviewer is born with these qualities. Luckily, interviewing is a skill that can be learned.

Knowledge of interview components and questioning techniques can help inexperienced interviewers develop or improve

their skills. The purpose of this manual is to help you to:

- Understand your responsibilities as an interviewer;
- Minimize your interviewing mistakes;
- Learn a systematic format for the interview;
- Develop questioning techniques;
- Design relevant and legal questions; and
- Evaluate candidates accurately.

Once this basic information is understood, the next step for you is to practice, practice, practice.

Interviewer Responsibilities

Interviewers have a public relations role that applies to both qualified and unqualified candidates. It is important to keep in mind that just as you are evaluating a candidate, he or she is assessing you and your company. In fact, to most applicants the interviewer is the company, so your actions--positive and negative--will affect the candidate's attitude towards your organization.

By fulfilling your responsibilities as an interviewer, you will be assured of conducting more effective interviews. There are six basic responsibilities:

Interviewer Responsibilities

1. **DEMONSTRATE** an interest in each candidate.

   Candidates should have the feeling that the interviewer is genuinely interested in what they have to say.

2. **ACT** professionally at all times.

   Being professional means that the interviewer is pleasant, businesslike, and tactful.

3. **MAKE** decisions objectively.

   Interviewers need to be aware of their own biases and should not draw any final conclusions about the candidate until the interview is concluded.

4. **CONTROL** the direction of the interview.

(Continued)

The interviewer decides when to obtain more information, when to move to another topic, and when to move to the next interview step.

5. **ASK** questions relevant to the selection criteria of the job.

   Selection criteria consist of the background, abilities, and skills a candidate should have in order to perform a specific job. Each candidate must be matched with the selection criteria of the job to make an accurate assessment. Interviewers will also need to weigh personal qualities that are likely to contribute to the individual's effectiveness on the job. Examples of personal qualities might include diligence, flexibility, conscientiousness, and neatness.

6. **EVALUATE** and **RECORD** information accurately.

Common Interviewer Mistakes

Common mistakes can be placed in two categories: interview process errors or interview content errors. Process errors include the following:

1. The interviewer talks too much. When interviewers talk too much, important information about the candidate is not gathered. In addition, candidates do not have the opportunity to present their qualifications. Keep in mind that the purpose of the interview is to extract information.

2. The interviewer jumps from topic to topic. If interviewers do not follow

an organized plan of action, it is quite likely they will jump from topic to topic. The interviewer can minimize this error by knowing what type of data is needed and by conducting the interview systematically.

3. The interviewer does not develop a rapport with the candidate. When an interviewer fails to establish rapport, the communications process is hindered. Candidates will be ill at ease and unable to articulate their qualifications competently.

Content errors also occur frequently. Here's a sampling of these mistakes:

4. The interviewer is not objective. Interviewers should not allow personal biases and preferences to affect how they view the candidate. In some cases, interviewers may go with their first impressions--right or wrong. In others they may make a decision about the candidate too early in the interview to have extracted the relevant information. You should be aware of the following biases so you can avoid them:

   - Stereotypes: Labeling a candidate because of a characteristic, such as appearance, that is not relevant to the selection criteria of the job.
   - Halo Effect: Allowing a positive characteristic to overshadow your perception of all other traits.
   - Comparison to Self: Evaluating a candidate similar to yourself positively.
   - Contrast Effect: Comparing candidates to one another instead of to the selection criteria. So, if you

have been interviewing poorly qualified candidates, you may rate average candidates highly.

- First Impressions: Judging persons prematurely.
- Placing Weight on Negative Information: Allowing negative information to have a greater impact than positive information.
- Time of Day: Evaluating candidates interviewed in the late morning or late afternoon as more unsatisfactory than candidates interviewed in the mid-morning or mid-afternoon.

5. The interviewer influences the candidate's responses. Because of poorly phrased questions, interviewers might tip off the candidate to the right answers. Questions such as, "This job requires someone who likes to work with data and details--does this sound like a job you'd like?" should not be asked.

   In other instances, interviewers might convey their disapproval of a candidate's response or question. This might occur through such nonverbal clues as frowning, crossing arms and legs, or turning the body away from the candidate. Disapproval might also be shown by a judgmental remark. These types of interviewer behaviors can put candidates on the defensive and might even block the communication process. It is very important for you to be aware of your own behavior during the interview so you can check these mistakes.

6. The interviewer does not conduct a job-related interview. What about those candidates who get jobs because they hit it off with the interviewer but do not satisfactorily perform on the

job? Interviewers sometimes get caught up with candidates who share common interests, backgrounds, or friends. If the interviewer maintains objectivity and follows a systematic format when conducting the interview, this mistake should not occur.

7. The interviewer fails to probe. When the interviewer fails to probe into a candidate's responses, the information extracted during the interview is usually too superficial to make an accurate evaluation. The interviewer should concentrate on a few key areas of the candidate's background and experiences to insure that the information needed is extracted.

8. The interviewer inaccurately assesses the candidate. Frequently, interviewers have problems comparing the information gathered during the interview to the selection criteria of the job. If the interview is conducted systematically and the questions asked are related to the selection criteria of the job, the interviewer will have less difficulty in assessing the candidate's strengths and weaknesses.

As you can see, many of the common interviewer mistakes are related to one another. There are several ways you can minimize your mistakes. First, prepare for each interview. Preparation might include reviewing the list of common interviewer mistakes, the selection criteria of the job, the type of questions to ask, and the candidate's resume. Second, follow a systematic format when conducting the interview. Third, use the selection criteria of the job to measure each candidate. Fourth, evaluate your own performance during and after each interview. An "Interviewer Self-Checklist" is included in Chapter 5 to help you in self-evaluation.

2

A Winning Interview Format

Interview Format

A systematic format for conducting interviews will help you to obtain the needed information from candidates and minimize the possibility of your making a mistake. The suggested format for the campus interview is:

The Six Steps	Interviewer Tasks
1. Preparing for Interview Time Frame: 2-3 Minutes	• Review candidate's resume. • Identify areas to explore during interview.
2. Breaking the Ice Time Frame: 3-4 Minutes	• Make the candidate feel comfortable. • Set an informal tone.
3. Asking Questions/ Verifying Information	• Extract job-related information from candidate. (Continued)

The Six Steps	Interviewer Tasks
Time Frame: 12-14 Minutes	• Verify unclear items on resume.
4. Answering Questions/ Promoting Company to Qualified Candidates Time Frame: 6-8 Minutes	• Answer candidate questions. • Promote company to qualified candidates.
5. Closing the Interview Time Frame: 1-2 Minutes	• Discuss next steps in selection process. • Bring interview to an end.
6. Decision Making/ Recording Information Time Frame: 3-4 Minutes	• Decide if candidate can do job. • Record information accurately.

Dissecting the Interview

STEP 1: Preparing for the Interview.

The interviewer's first task is to study the candidate's resume or college placement form. Some of the major content items you should be reviewing are:

- Degree(s)
- Academic major, minor, concentrations
- Grade point average --overall

--in major
--by semester

- Honors
- Certificates
- Research Projects
- Work Experience
  --summer
  --cooperative education
  --work-study
  --internships
  --part-time
- Percent of College Expenses Earned
- College Activities
  --memberships
  --leadership roles
- Geographical Preference
- Career Objective
- Interests

In addition, you should evaluate the overall appearance, organization, and writing of the resume.

How to Review the Resume

Look for:

1. Knowledge, experiences, or interests that match the selection criteria of the job, as well as those gaps that might limit the candidate's performance of the job.
2. Clues as to how the candidate operates with others: alone, in a team, as a member, or as a leader.
3. Indicators of a candidate's motivation, such as percent of college expenses earned.

4. Spelling, grammar, organization, and overall appearance of resume.

5. Common interests that can be used to start off the interview.

Organizing and Using the Information

1. Decide what areas to explore during the interview.

2. Identify the questions that will allow you to gather the relevant information from the candidate. Decide the order to ask them.

STEP 2: Breaking the Ice

Breaking the ice is an important step because a relaxed candidate is more willing to share information. Your first task is

to introduce yourself with a smile and a firm handshake and set the stage by asking the candidate about a hobby or an interest. The few minutes that you spend doing this will set the tone for the entire interview. Remember, you should not make a decision to accept or reject a candidate during this step.

STEP 3: Asking Questions/Verifying Information

This is the most important step of the interview. Your first task is to ask candidates if they would mind if you took notes. Be sure to jot down key words or phrases which will help you when you evaluate the candidate at the end.

The information obtained from the candidate during this step will enable you to make an accurate assessment of the individual. The questions designed during the interview preparation step should be asked at this time. They should be:

- Clear,
- Concise,
- Relevant to the candidate's background and job,
- Worded not to trick or put the candidate under undue stress,
- Proper in terms of Equal Employment Opportunity Guidelines,
- Phrased so the candidate is not tipped off to right answers,
- Asked one at a time, and
- Designed not to rehash resume data unless verifying information.

STEP 4: Answering Questions/Promoting the Company to Qualified Candidates

The interviewer's task during this step is to answer questions and to promote the company to qualified candidates. Whether or not you decide to promote the company, you should always answer the candidate's questions. The types of information candidates want include:

1. Job characteristics,
2. Advancement opportunities,
3. Organizational structure and description,
4. Salary/benefits,
5. Professional development opportunities,
6. Interviewer's perceptions of company/job, and
7. Next step in the interview process.

Once you have answered the candidate's questions, you need to decide about promoting the company. Information presented usually includes descriptions of the company and product line if the candidate has not read the college relations literature, the future of the organization, and opportunities for the candidate.

Some guidelines for this step are:

- Be enthusiastic.
- Listen to the questions asked. Determine what interests or motivates the individual and then promote those aspects of the company.
- Defer questions that you can't answer to the second round of interviews.

- Avoid situations where the candidate wants very detailed information about the company or the job.

- Ask if the candidate has read the college relations literature to avoid duplicating information.

STEP 5: Closing the Interview

Your task is to thank the candidate for his or her interest in your company and to make sure they know the next step in the selection process. Sometimes a candidate may want to linger, so you must tactfully bring the interview to an end.

STEP 6: Decision Making/Recording of Information

After the interview, your task is to record your comments on the candidate. If you wait, you will find it difficult to distinguish one candidate from another, which will lead to an inaccurate evaluation. Since other members of your company will be reviewing your form, make sure your writing is clear and that you have been thorough in your assessment.

Helpful Guidelines for Directing the Interview

1. CONTROL THE INTERVIEW

Controlling the interview means that you must:

- Establish boundaries for discussion,

- Decide when to move on to another topic or interview step,

- Decide the types of questions to ask, and

- Decide the order in which to ask them.

2. START AND END ON TIME

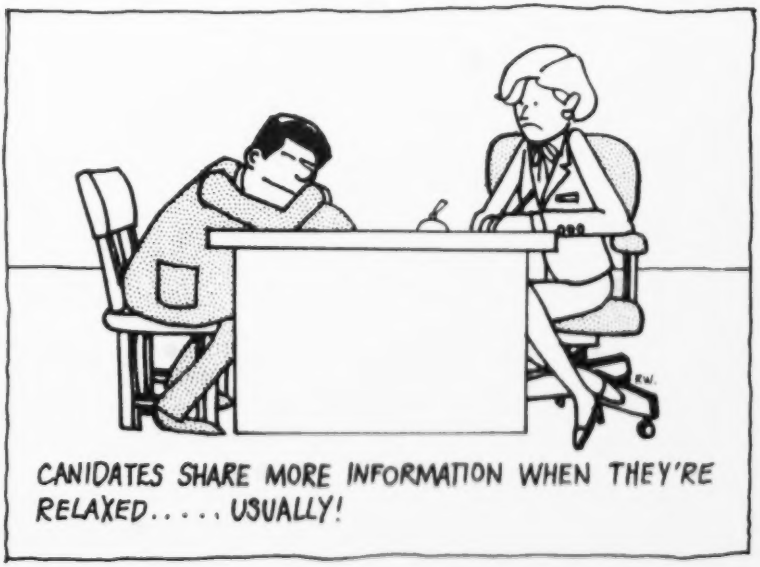
Interviews that begin late or extend beyond the alloted time interfere with candidates' schedules.

3. LISTEN AND OBSERVE

Show your interest in the candidate by making good eye contact, nodding your head appropriately, and concentrating on what the candidates say and how they say it. You need to listen for the words as well as the feelings behind them. You should also observe the candidate's body language and voice for reactions to questions and responses.

4. DEVELOP RAPPORT EARLY

Candidates are more likely to share information when they feel comfortable with



the interviewer. Establish rapport early in the interview, so you can easily extract the necessary information from the candidate in the alloted time.

5. CONDUCT EACH INTERVIEW STEP, CONNECTING THEM SMOOTHLY

Each step in the interview is interdependent. You must conduct each one to insure a successful interview. For example, if you fail to develop a rapport with a candidate in the beginning, you will have difficulty extracting information later. If you don't allow candidates to ask questions, they may lose interest in your organization. And, if you don't evaluate the candidate right after the interview, you will not be able to make an accurate assessment.

Keep in mind each interview will be different. You will spend varying amounts of time in each step, depending on the candidate. Also, you will need to make a smooth transition from step to step to make the interview flow better. Some examples of transitions follow.

The Six Steps	Interviewer Tasks
1. Preparing for Interview Time Frame: 2-3 Minutes	• Review candidate's resume. • Identify areas to explore during interview.
TRANSITION: "(Candidate's Name)? Good morning. I'm (name)."	

(Continued)

The Six Steps	Interviewer Tasks
2. Breaking the Ice Time Frame: 3-4 Minutes	• Make the candidate feel comfortable. • Set an informal tone.
TRANSITION: "Let me explain the format for the interview. I would like to ask you some questions to get to know you better and then give you a chance to ask me questions."	
3. Asking Questions/ Verifying Information Time Frame: 12-14 Minutes	• Extract job-related information from candidate. • Verify items on resume.
TRANSITION: "Do you have any questions for me?"	
4. Answering/Questions Promoting Company to Qualified Candidates Time Frame: 6-8 Minutes	• Answer candidate questions. • Promote company to qualified candidates.
TRANSITION: "If you don't have any other questions, I'd like to thank you for your interest."	
5. Closing the Interview Time Frame: 1-2 Minutes	• Discuss next steps in selection process. • Bring interview to end. (Continued)

The Six Steps	Interviewer Tasks
6. Decision Making/ Recording Information Time Frame: 3-4 Minutes	• Decide if candidate can do job. • Record information accurately.

EXERCISE I: INTERVIEW PREPARATION

The purpose of this activity is to give you practice in interview preparation.

You have an entry-level management trainee job opening to fill. The candidate selected will enter a nine-month training program and then will manage a branch store of a small retail chain. The selection criteria of the job include: ability to take charge, ability to organize, ability to communicate, ability to think analytically, tact, and social sensitivity.

Review the resume of Peter Knox. Take 2-3 minutes to study it.

1. List Knox's knowledge, experiences, or interests that match selection criteria.

2. Is Knox missing any knowledge or experience in relation to the criteria?

3. How does Knox operate with others? Alone? Team? Leadership role?

Peter Knox
970 Wildwood Road
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601
201/865-3906

OBJECTIVE

A position as a retail manager-trainee.

EDUCATION

New York University, New York, NY
B.S., Business Administration. Concentration in Marketing. Ranked in top 50 percent of class.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Assistant to Buyer, Gimbels, New York, NY
One-semester internship. Responsible for assisting buyer for men's sports wear.

Resident Adviser, Major Hall, New York University
Responsible for managing residence hall housing 155 students. Handled administrative recordkeeping.

Swim Instructor, New England Sports Camp, Essex, Connecticut
Responsible for teaching swimming to eight different age groups. Responsible for developing individualized programs for more experienced swimmers.

ACTIVITIES

Swim Team
Resident Hall Council, Adviser
Marketing Club

INTERESTS

Swimming, Camping

REFERENCES

Available upon request.

4. Are there any indicators of motivation on the resume?

5. What type of impression does the candidate's resume make?

6. What would you use for an ice breaker in this interview?

7. What areas would you want to explore with Knox?

8. Develop four questions that would help you extract the type of information you need to make a decision.

3

How and What to Ask

There are three basic questioning techniques:

1. Open questioning techniques,
2. Mid-range questioning techniques, and
3. Narrow questioning techniques.

Open Questioning Techniques

1. Open-ended Questions.

   Open-ended questions require the candidate to answer with more than a yes or no. They are broad-brush questions.

Example: "Describe your internship experience."

2. Clarification Questions.

   Clarification questions are used to clear up inconsistencies in resume information or the candidate's comments.

Example: "You indicated that you held leadership roles on campus but your resume doesn't indicate this. Please explain."

3. Elaboration Questions.

Elaboration questions ask the candidate to expand on an answer because insufficient information was provided.

Example: "Please tell me more about that."

4. Looping Back Questions.

When the candidate seems to be withholding information, the interviewer should rephrase the question later in the interview. The looping back question covers the same topic asked about earlier in the interview but is worded differently.

Example: "How would you describe your working relationship with your internship supervisor?"

Looping Back Question: "What type of working relationship would you like with your supervisor?"

Mid-Range Questioning Techniques

1. Pause/Silence.

When candidates fail to answer a question to your satisfaction, you can

respond with silence to encourage further elaboration. Silence can also be used to give candidates time to gather their thoughts before answering.

2. Reflecting

This technique is used to indicate an understanding of the candidate's feelings. It encourages the disclosure of information. The interviewer rephrases the feeling, not the content, of the candidate's answer without using the exact words.

Example: (Candidate) "I like situations where I can be creative."

(Interviewer) "So you prefer opportunities where you can express yourself.

3. Acceptance.

The interviewer uses positive cues to encourage more information. These responses do not mean that the content of the candidate's answers is being judged.

Example: "I see."

"That's interesting."

Narrow Questioning Techniques

1. Summarization.

Interviewer restates the candidate's answer to check for correctness.

Example: "From what you have said, a lot of travel within the job would be difficult for you."

2. Verification.

This technique is used to confirm a factual item.

3. Close-ended Questions.

A close-ended question, exactly the opposite of an open question, requires a yes-no answer.

Example: "Did you complete a class in accounting?"

4. Interrupting.

Interviewers should interrupt when candidates have misunderstood the question or have given enough information.

5. Probe.

This technique is very useful in pinpointing an item in a student's answer that you want to focus upon.

Example: (after a question about the candidate's involvement in campus activities) "Tell me about your involvement in the fraternity."

6. **Request Examples.**

To get even more information from a candidate, the interviewer can ask for examples to support an answer.

Example: "You indicated that you have managed budgets. Could you describe some specific situations where you have done so?"

Choosing Your Questioning Technique

Many factors come into play in deciding which questioning technique will be most effective. Choosing a questioning technique is not only determined by your interest in opening or narrowing the flow of information, but also by the candidate's responses. Let's look at some examples.

At the beginning of the Asking Questions/Verifying Information step of the interview, you will want to gather information on specific background areas. First ask a broad-brush question, which will give you an overview of the candidate's background. Then select an area that you want to explore in more detail. For example:

Interviewer: "What was the most challenging part of your internship?"

Candidate: "Well, I had to develop a marketing plan for a new product with little or no help from my supervisor."

Interviewer: "Tell me how you went about developing the plan."

Sometimes your questioning technique will depend upon the candidate's response. When the candidate's answer seems to indicate a misunderstanding, you may need to interrupt and restate the question. For example:

Interviewer: "Tell me about the course you liked best."

Candidate: "I really liked all my courses. In fact, I liked going to school here because of all the activities..."

Interviewer: "Before you go on, I'd like to know which course you liked best and why."

When a candidate only partially answers the question, you need to zero in and request additional information. For example:

Interviewer: "What are you looking for in a job?"

Candidate: "Challenge, I want a challenging job."

Interviewer: "What exactly do you mean by a challenging job?"

Choosing a questioning technique to open or close the flow of information takes practice. Here are a few guidelines to help you select the most appropriate technique:

1. Ask an open question in each background area.

2. Probe the candidate's answer.

3. Check your understanding of the response by reflecting what you heard.

4. Use silence to extract more information.

5. Interrupt when the candidate goes off on a tangent.

6. Cover uncomfortable areas for the candidate by asking a looping back question later in the interview.

7. Ask nonthreatening questions if the candidate is reluctant to talk or appears uncomfortable.

What to Ask

During the Asking Questions step of the interview, you will be extracting data to help you decide if the candidate is qualified for the job. This is the heart of the interview. To make an accurate assessment of the candidate's ability to do the job, you must gather relevant, job-related information.

What type of questions do you ask? Most interviewers concentrate on a few key areas:

1. College Experiences
   - Courses
   - Projects
   - Activities
2. Work Experiences
   - Part-time, Summer Employment

- Internships, Cooperative Education Programs

3. Goals and Interests

4. Personal Characteristics

Job experiences or knowledge gained in college provide important information about the candidate's skills and abilities. Skills can be measured by discussing activities where they have been used. Your task is to determine if the candidate learned from the job and if the individual is knowledgeable of the course materials.

You will also need to assess the motivation of candidates by discussing their goals and interests. You will want to find out if the candidates have established

short- and long-term goals. You will also want to know to what extent they have financed their college education. Look for clues such as the level of animation when they discuss an aspect of their background.

In addition, assess the candidate's personal characteristics during the interview. You will be able to tell if candidates are shy or outgoing. You will be able to see if they prefer to work alone or in groups, or if they naturally assume leadership roles. Throughout the course of the interview you will be looking at strengths and weaknesses that might affect a candidate's performance on the job. Remember, you want to extract data related to the selection criteria of the job. Your questions should be geared to these criteria.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Questions on College Experiences**

   What courses did you like best in school? Least? Why?

   What school activities have you participated in?

   If you were starting college all over again, what would you do differently?

   Tell me about the project you did in your _____ course?

   Why did you choose to major in _____?

   What class or club offices did you hold?

   What leadership roles have you held?

   Why did you decide to attend this college?

(Continued)

How has your coursework prepared you for this job?

2. **Questions on Work Experience**

Tell me about your part-time job (or internship, cooperative education experience, summer job)?

Describe your responsibilities.

What did you enjoy the most about the job? Least? Why?

What did you find easy to do? Difficult?

How has your work experience prepared you for this job?

Describe your relationship with your supervisor.

What types of projects did you work on? Describe what you did.

What did you learn from this experience?

Tell me about a problem you had on your job and how you solved it.

3. **Questions on Goals and Interests**

What do you do in your spare time for enjoyment?

What are your goals for your first job?

What would you like to be doing in five years?

What are your plans for graduate study?

If you had more time, what types of activities would you get involved in?

(Continued)

To what extent did you contribute to financing your education?

4. **Questions on Personal Characteristics**

Describe your typical day.

What are your strengths? Weaknesses?

How would your friends describe you?

What are you looking for in a job?

What type of working relationship would you like to have with your supervisor?

Do you have anything you want to tell me that we didn't cover?

Legal Issues Related to Interviewing

Many Federal laws and regulations impact the interview. Two are Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Title VII, as amended, prohibits "discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." The Age Discrimination in Employment Act prohibits discrimination against individuals who are 40 to 70 years of age.

Certain Federal contractors are prohibited from discrimination against the handicapped, disabled veterans, and veterans of the Vietnam era. In addition, some state statutes extend beyond the provisions of Federal laws and provide protection to certain groups other than the handicapped, disabled veterans, and veterans of the Vietnam era, or extend protection beyond the requirements of Federal law.

What guideline should be used in employment screening? A general guideline was developed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the publication titled, *Pre-employment Inquiries and Equal Employment Opportunity Law.* The publication states the "law, interpreted through court rulings and EEOC decisions, prohibits the use of all pre-employment inquiries and qualifying factors which disproportionately screen out members of minority groups or members of one sex and are not valid predictors of successful job performance or cannot be justified by 'business necessity'." This prohibits employer inquiries, such as interview questions, or qualifying factors, such as prescreening criteria, that adversely affect minorities and are not valid job-related predictors.

Discrimination against various groups is covered by two theories. The first, disparate treatment, makes it unlawful for an employer to treat persons differently because of their race, religion, sex, or

national origin. Therefore, employers should take care in the interviewing process not to ask certain kinds of questions of one race versus another race or one sex versus another sex. To avoid any claim of disparate treatment, all candidates should be asked the same questions.

The second theory of discrimination is disparate impact under which facially neutral or objective employment practices or criteria can violate Title VII if they disproportionately exclude members of a protected group. As the basis for the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, this theory requires that selection criteria that adversely impacts upon a particular group must be validated as a predictor of competence on the job.

How do these theories affect the types of questions that can be asked during an interview? EEOC cautions interviewers to ask themselves the following questions when devising application forms or seeking information from candidates:

1. Will the answers to this question, if used in making a selection, disqualify a significantly larger percentage of minorities or members of one sex than other groups?

2. Is this information really needed to judge an applicant's competence or qualification for the job in question?

In both questions, the issue is not the intent of the interviewer in asking the question, but rather the result. Even if a potentially discriminatory question is asked unintentionally, the question is still considered discriminatory if it has a negative effect upon the applicant. The rule is, if you think a question might be discriminatory, don't ask it.

Keep in mind that many questions are not in and of themselves illegal, but

rather may be evidence of discrimination. For example, standing alone, an inquiry about an individual's age is not in violation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. However, the fact that this inquiry was made may be used as evidence that the individual was rejected from the job because of age. So the question is not necessarily illegal, but using the answer in a discriminatory fashion may violate Federal law. The legality of a question comes into play when it requires an answer that can be used by an employer to exclude a candidate, but is not a valid predictor of successful performance.

It is also important to realize that the issue of inappropriate inquiries may occur throughout the interview. For example, during the Breaking the Ice step, the interviewer may touch upon topics, such as family background, that are questionable areas to discuss. Interviewers should avoid questionable areas for discussion throughout the course of the interview.

If you want to explore this topic further, a copy of the EEOC's *Pre-Employment Inquiries and Equal Employment Opportunity Law* follows. You might also want to contact the district office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the office in your state which enforces the fair employment law, and your corporate attorney.

Another resource specifically written for the placement and recruitment field is *Career Planning, Placement and Recruitment Law: A Source Book for Practitioners* by Lynne D. Battle. It is published by CPC and covers a broad range of topics, including affirmative action and equal pay.

EEOC PRE-EMPLOYMENT INQUIRIES AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY LAW*

Pre-Employment Inquiries

Employment application forms and pre-employment interviews have traditionally been instruments for eliminating, at an early stage, "unsuited" or "unqualified" persons from consideration for employment and often have been used in such a way as to restrict or deny employment opportunities for women and members of minority groups.

The law, interpreted through court rulings and EEOC decisions, prohibits the use of all pre-employment inquiries and qualifying factors which disproportionately screen out members of minority groups or members of one sex and are not valid predictors of successful job performance or cannot be justified by "business necessity."[1]

In devising or reviewing application forms or in seeking information from job applicants, employers should ask themselves: (1) Will the answers to this question, if used in making a selection, have a disparate effect in screening out minorities and/or members of one sex (i.e. disqualify a significantly larger percentage of members of a particular group than others)? (2) Is this information really needed to judge an applicant's competence or qualification for the job in question?

Business Necessity and Job Relatedness

The concept of business necessity has been narrowly defined by the courts. When a practice is found to have discriminatory effects, it can be justified only by showing that it is necessary to the safe and

*Reprinted from EEOC's Pre-Employment Inquiries and Equal Opportunity Law.

[1]/Griggs v. Duke Power Co., 401 U.S. 424 (1971)

efficient operation of the business, that it effectively carries out the purpose it is supposed to serve and that there are no alternative policies or practices which would better or equally well serve the same purpose with less discriminatory impact.[2]

An employer should be able to demonstrate through statistical evidence that any selection procedure, which has a "disparate effect" on groups protected by the law, is job related (i.e. validly predicts successful performance in the type of job in question). If this cannot be shown or if the employer cannot or does not wish to perform a technical validation study, the use of that procedure should be discontinued or altered in such a way that there is no longer a discriminatory effect.[3] Even when a procedure having an adverse impact can be validated, it may not be used if there are other procedures which would accomplish the same goal and have less of a discriminatory effect.

Some Specific Issues Addressed by Court and EEOC Decisions:

Race, Color, Religion, Sex, or National Origin

Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, pre-employment inquiries concerning race, color, religion, sex or national origin are not considered violations of the law in and of themselves. However, inquiries which either directly or indirectly disclose such information, unless otherwise explained, may constitute

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[2]/Griggs v. Duke Power Co., supra; Robinson v. Lorillard Corp., 444 F.2d 791 (C.A. 4, 1971); U.S. v. St. Louis-San Francisco R.R. Co., 464 F.2d 301, 308 (C.A. 8, 1972); Jones v. LeeWay Motor Freight, Inc., 431 F.2d 245 (C.A. 10, 1970).

[3]/EEOC Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, 29 CFR 1607 (1981).

evidence of discrimination prohibited by Title VII.

Some state fair employment practice laws expressly prohibit inquiries on employment applications concerning the applicant's race, color, religion, sex or national origin. In some states it may also be considered illegal to seek related data (former name, past residence, names of relatives, place of birth, citizenship, education, organizational activities, photograph and color of eyes and hair) which could indirectly reveal similar information.*

Denial of equal employment opportunity to individuals because of marriage to or association with persons of a specific national, ethnic or racial origin, or because of attendance at schools or churches, or membership in organizations identified with particular racial or ethnic groups, may be considered a violation of Title VII.[4] Charges presented to EEOC alleging such discrimination will be examined with particular concern to determine if, indeed, the alleged discrimination was based on race or national origin. These determination will be made according to general Title VII principles, such as disparate treatment and adverse impact.

Height and Weight

EEOC and the courts have ruled minimum height and weight requirements to be illegal if they screen out a disproportionate number of minority-group individuals (e.g. Spanish-surnamed or Asian Americans) or women, and the employer cannot show that these standards are essential to the safe performance of the job in question.[5]

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*See section on "Data Required for Legitimate Business Purposes."

[4]/EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination Because of National Origin, supra; EEOC Decision No. 71-969 (1970).

Marital Status, Number of Children and Provision for Child Care

Questions about marital status, pregnancy, future child-bearing plans and number and age of children are frequently used to discriminate against women and may be a violation of Title VII if used to deny or limit employment opportunities for female applicants. Employers are cautioned against use of such non-job-related

[5]/Davis v. County of Los Angeles, 566 F. 2d 1334 (C.A. 9, 1977), vacated and remanded as moot on other grounds, 440 U.S. 625 (1979); Dothard v. Rawlinson, 433 U.S. 321 (1977); EEOC Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures 29 CFR 1607.4c (2), and Guidelines on Discrimination Because of National Origin, 29 CFR 1606.6(a)(2).

questions. Information needed for tax, insurance or social security purposes may be obtained after employment.*

It is a violation of Title VII for employers to require pre-employment information about child-care arrangements from female applicants only. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that an employer may not have different hiring policies for men and women with pre-school children.[6]

English Language Skill

When the use of an English language proficiency test has an adverse effect upon a particular minority group and English language skill is not a requirement of the work to be performed, there is a violation of Title VII.[7]

Educational Requirements

The U.S. Supreme Court has found an employer's requirement of a high school education discriminatory where statistics showed such a requirement operated to disqualify blacks at a substantially higher rate than whites and there was no evidence that the requirement was significantly related to successful job performance. This standard applies to all groups protected under Title VII and is relevant to all questions relating to educational attainment, where no direct job related requirement or business necessity can be proven.[8]

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*See section on "Data Required for Legitimate Business Purposes."

[6]/Phillips v. Martin Marietta Corp., 400 U.S. 542 (1971); EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Sex, 29 CFR 1604.4 and 1604.10.

[7]/EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination Because of National Origin, supra. Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, supra.

[8]/Griggs v. Duke Power Co., supra.

Friends or Relatives Working for the Employer

Information about friends or relatives working for an employer is not relevant to an applicant's competence. Requesting such information may be unlawful if it indicates a preference for friends and relatives of present employees and the composition of the present workforce is such that this preference would reduce or eliminate opportunities for women or minority group members.[9] However, a "nepotism" policy which prohibits or limits employment opportunities of a spouse or other relative also may be illegal if it has an adverse impact on job opportunities for either women or men as a group.[10]

Arrest Records

Because members of some minority groups are arrested substantially more often than whites in proportion to their numbers in the population, making personnel decisions on the basis of arrest records has a disproportionate effect on the employment opportunities of members of these groups. The courts and the Commission accordingly have held that without proof of business necessity an employer's use of arrest records to disqualify job applicants is unlawful discrimination.[11] Even if an employer does not consider arrest information, the mere request for such informa-

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[9]/Local 53, International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers v. Vogler, 407F.2d 1047 (C.A. 5, 1969); Lea v. Cone Mills Corp., 438 F.2d 86 (C.A. 4, 1971), aff'g., in part, 301 F. Supp. 97 (D.C.N.C., 1969); EEOC Decision No. 7413 (1973).

[10]/EEOC Decision No. 75-239 (1975).

[11]/Carter v. Gallagher, 452 F.2d 315 (C.A. 8, 1971) cer. den., 406 U.S. 950 (1972); Gregory v. Litton Systems Inc., 316 F. Supp. 401 (D.C. Cal. 1970), aff'd. as mod., 472 F.2d 631 (C. A. 9, 1972).

tion tends to discourage minority applicants and will, therefore, be considered with suspicion by the Commission.

Conviction Records

A conviction for a felony or misdemeanor may not by itself lawfully constitute an absolute bar to employment; however, an employer may give fair consideration to the relationship between a conviction and the applicant's fitness for a particular job.[12] Conviction records should be cause for rejection only if their number, nature and recentness would cause the applicant to be unsuitable for the position. If such inquiries are made, they should be accompanied by a statement that a conviction record will not necessarily be a bar to employment, and that factors such as age and time of the offense, seriousness and nature of the violation, and rehabilitation will be taken into account.

Discharge from Military Service

Employers should not, as a matter of policy, reject applicants with less than honorable discharges from military service. Minority service members have had a higher proportion of general and undesirable discharges than non-minority members of similar aptitude and education.

Thus, an employer's requirement that to be eligible for employment ex-members of the armed services must have been honorably discharged has a disparate effect upon minorities and may be a violation of Title VII.[13]

One Federal district court has held that an employer may inquire into an

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[12]/Carter v. Gallagher, supra; Green v. Missouri Pacific R.R. Co., 423 F.2d 1290 (C.A. 8, 1975); EEOC Decision No. 78-10.

[13]/EEOC Decision No. 74-25 (1973).

applicant's military service record if information regarding discharge status is used not in making a hiring decision but in deciding whether further investigations should be made into the applicant's background and qualifications. If further inquiry reveals non-discriminatory grounds for denying employment, the employer may then refuse to hire applicant.[14]

Since a request for this information may discourage minority workers from applying and therefore be grounds for a discriminatory charge, employers should avoid such questions unless "business necessity" can be shown. As in the case of conviction records discussed above, questions regarding military service should be accompanied by a statement that a dishonorable or general discharge is not an absolute bar to employment and that other factors will affect a final decision to hire or not to hire.

Age

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with respect to individuals 40 to 70 years of age.

A request that an applicant state his age may tend to deter older applicants or may otherwise indicate discrimination based on age. Consequently, employment application forms which request such information will be closely scrutinized to assure that the request is for a permissible purpose and not for purposes proscribed by the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. That the purpose is not one proscribed by the Act should be made known to the applicants.[15]

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[14] /Lewis v. Western Airlines, 9 EPD 10, 151 (D.C. ND Cal., 1975).

[15] /EEOC Age Discrimination in Employment Act regulations, 29 CFR 1625.5 (1982).

Citizenship

EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination Because of National Origin indicate that consideration of an applicant's citizenship may constitute evidence of discrimination on the basis of national origin.

The law clearly protects all individuals, both citizens and non-citizens, in the United States against discrimination.

Where citizenship requirements have the purpose or effect of discriminating against persons of a particular national origin, they are prohibited.

If states have enacted laws prohibiting the employment of non-citizens that are in conflict with Title VII, the laws are superceded by Section 708 of Title VII.[16]

The U.S. Supreme Court has found that a state civil service law which restricted state employment to U.S. citizens was unconstitutional and a denial of equal protection and benefit of the laws. A flat ban on employment of aliens without regard to the type of position or to the characteristics of the applicant involved was not justifiable on grounds of public interest.[17]

National Security

It is not unlawful to deny employment to any individual who does not fulfill the national security requirements stated in Section 703(g) of Title VII.

Economic Status

Rejection of applicants because of poor credit ratings has a disparate impact on

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[16] /EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination Because of National Origin, supra.

[17] /Sugarman v. Dougall, 339 F. Supp. 906 (S.D.N.Y. 1971), aff'd sub nom, 413 U.S. 634 (1973).

minority groups and hence has been found unlawful by the Commission, unless business necessity can be shown.

Inquiries as to an applicant's financial status, such as bankruptcy, car ownership, rental or ownership of a house, length of residence at an address, or past garnishments of wages, if utilized to make employment decisions, may likewise violate Title VII.[18]

Availability for Work on Weekends or Holidays

Employers and unions have an obligation to accommodate the religious beliefs of employees and/or applicants, unless to do so would cause undue hardship. EEOC has determined that the use of pre-employment inquiries that determine an applicant's availability has an exclusionary effect on the employment opportunities of persons following certain religious practices. Questions relating to availability for work on Friday evenings, Saturdays or holidays should not be asked unless the employer can show that the questions have not had an exclusionary effect on its employees or applicants who would need an accommodation for their religious practices, that the questions are otherwise justified by business necessity, and that there are no alternative procedures which would have a lesser exclusionary effect.[19]

Data Required for Legitimate Business Purposes

An employer may justifiably seek and obtain information regarding a job ap-

[18]/Johnson v. Pike Co., 332 F. Supp. 490 (C.D. Calif., 1971). EEOC Decision No. 74-02 (1973).

[19]/EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Religion, 29 CFR 1605.3 (1981).

plicant's race, sex or ethnicity as needed for implementation of affirmative action programs, court-ordered or other government reporting or recordkeeping requirements, and for studies to identify and resolve possible problems in the recruitment and testing of members of minority groups and/or women to insure equal employment for all persons.

Data on such matters as marital status, number and age of children, and similar issues, which could be used in a discriminatory manner in making employment decisions but which are necessary for insurance, reporting requirements or other business purposes, can and should preferably be obtained after a person has been employed, not by means of an application form or pre-employment interview.

However, the employer must be able to demonstrate that such data were collected for legitimate business purposes. Such information should be kept separate from the regular permanent employee records to insure that it is not used to discriminate in making personnel decisions. To protect themselves against the improper use of such information by their selecting officials, employers should consider collecting such information by the use of a "tear-off sheet." After completing the application and the tear-off sheet, the latter is separated from the application and used only for purposes unrelated to the selection decision. The tear-off sheet should state the purpose for which the information is being collected and that the information will not be available or used for making employee selections in order to allay fears that the information might be used to discriminate on a prohibited basis.

It is reasonable to assume that all questions on an application form or in a pre-employment interview are for some purpose and that selection or hiring

decisions are made on the basis of the answers given. In an investigation of charges of discrimination, the burden of proof is on the employer to show that answers to all questions on application forms or in oral interviews are not used in making hiring and placement decisions in a discriminatory manner prohibited by the law.

To seek information other than that which is essential to effectively evaluate a person's qualifications for employment is to make oneself vulnerable to charges of discrimination and consequent legal proceedings.

It is therefore in an employer's own self-interest to carefully review all procedures used in screening applicants for employment, eliminating or altering any not justified by business necessity.

EEOC is responsible for administering Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, as amended, and Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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DO - District Office
AO - Area Office

EXERCISE II: OPEN QUESTIONS

Directions: Open-ended questions require a candidate to answer with more than a yes or a no. Make the following questions open-ended.

1. Did you like your summer job?

_____

_____

2. Are you active in any extra-curricular activities?

_____

_____

3. Did you have a chance to read our company's literature?

_____

_____

4. Have you held any class or club offices?

_____

_____

EXERCISE III: PROBE QUESTIONS

Directions: Probe questions are used to pinpoint an item in a student's answer that you want to follow up. Write probe questions for each of the following situations.

Situation 1:

Interviewer: What is the most important aspect of the job you're seeking?

Candidate: It has to be challenging.

Probe: _____

_____

Situation 2:

Interviewer: Why do you want to work for this organization?

Candidate: I like helping people.

Probe: _____

_____

Situation 3:

Interviewer: Would you describe some of your successes in sales?

Candidate: I won an award for high sales in my summer job.

Probe: _____

_____

Situation 4:

Interviewer: I noticed on your resume that you held two jobs last summer--one for a very short period of time. Why did you leave the first job?

Candidate: My boss was real hard to work for. I worked hard but we just couldn't get along. So I looked for another job.

Probe: _____

_____

EXERCISE IV: NONLEADING QUESTIONS

Directions: Nonleading questions do not give clues to the desired response. Change the following questions to nonleading questions.

1. This job requires someone who likes to work with data and details. Does this sound like a job you'd like?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. This job requires over 50 percent travel. Would this be a problem for you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Our company encourages a lot of teamwork on projects. Do you like working with others or do you prefer working alone?

_____

EXERCISE V: REFLECTING TECHNIQUES

Directions: Rephrase the feeling, not the content, of the following candidate responses. Do not use the exact words of the candidate.

1. I really don't like to do the same thing over and over.

2. Being president of the Student Forum was too much work.

3. Between my scholarship and part-time jobs, I managed to pay for my entire college education.

_____

_____

4. I have all A's in my major.

_____

_____

_____

_____

EXERCISE VI: SELECTION CRITERIA FOR SALES POSITION

Directions: The purpose of this exercise is to help you learn how to design interview questions or observe behaviors that are related to specific selection criteria. For the six selection criteria below, develop six questions or identify behaviors that will help determine the candidate's strength in each category. The candidate's resume is on page 61.

1. STRONG COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Question/Behavior:_____

_____

_____

_____

2. ENTHUSIASM

Question/Behavior:_____

_____

_____

3. STRONG DESIRE TO MAKE MONEY

Question/Behavior: _____

4. PERSUASIVENESS

Question/Behavior: _____

5. TACT

Question/Behavior: _____

6. INITIATIVE

Question/Behavior: _____

John Smith
62 Highland Avenue
Bethlehem, PA 18017
215/868-1421

OBJECTIVE

An entry-level sales position with an organization which rewards motivation, hard work, and effectiveness.

EDUCATION

CPC University, Bethlehem, PA
B.S. in English

Major GPA: 3.8 Overall GPA: 3.5

HONORS/ACTIVITIES

Pi Lamma Mi Honor Society; Who's Who; Squash Club; Coffeehouse Chairperson

EXPERIENCE

Owner/Manager, painting business. Advertised, gave estimates, managed accounts and taxes, and hired/supervised 6 employees.

Host, local restaurant. Greeted customers and took reservations.

PERSONAL

Asked to try out for semi-pro squash team. Covered 75 percent of college expenses.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.

EXERCISE VII: CAN INTERVIEWERS ASK THIS QUESTION?

For each question below, indicate whether you believe the question is legal or questionable by checking the appropriate line:

	Legal	Questionable
1. What is your maiden name?	_____	_____
2. Are you a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or do you possess a right to work certificate from the Department of Labor and Immigration and Naturalization Service?	_____	_____
3. What is your place of birth?	_____	_____
4. What is your religious affiliation?	_____	_____
5. What is your date of birth?	_____	_____
6. What is the name and address of a person to be notified in case of emergency?	_____	_____
7. What is your marital status?	_____	_____
8. How many children do you have?	_____	_____

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	Legal	Questionable
9. What does your spouse do for a living?	_____	_____
10. Have you ever been arrested?	_____	_____
11. Do you have a physical disability which would prevent you from performing this job?	_____	_____
12. Are you over eighteen years of age?	_____	_____
13. If you have been in the military service, were you honorably discharged?	_____	_____

Answers

1) Q 2) L 3) Q 4) Q 5) Q 6) L 7) Q
8) Q 9) Q 10) Q 11) L 12) L 13) Q

4

Putting the Interview on Paper

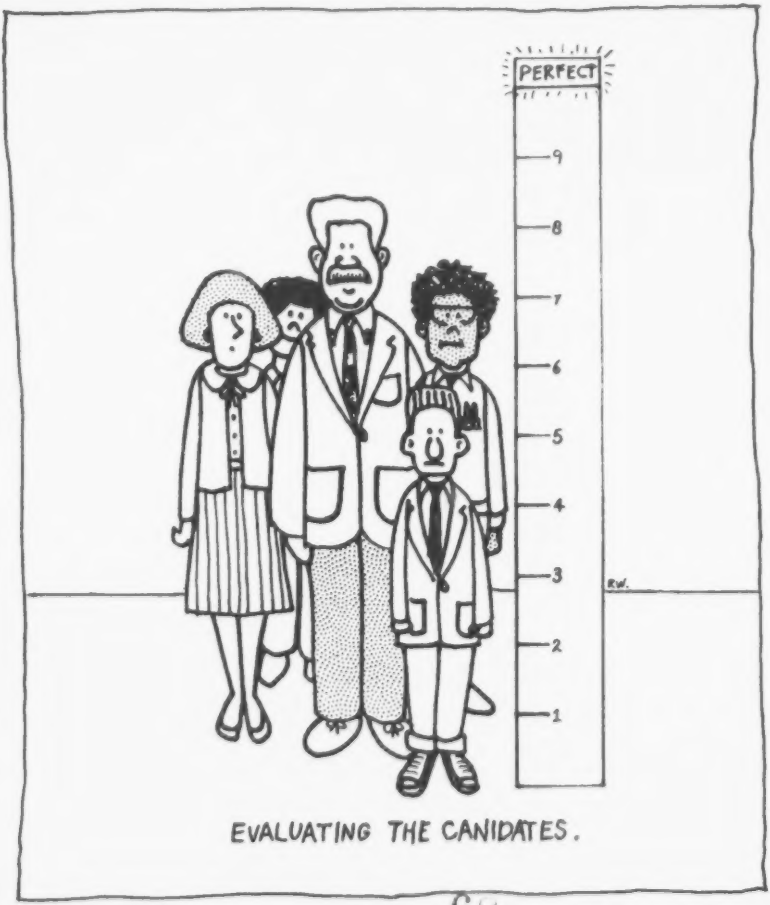
Imagine that you've just finished interviewing a candidate. You now have approximately five minutes to review your notes, record your comments on the evaluation form, and recommend or not recommend the candidate for further consideration. You will, of course, find some candidates you can clearly recommend and some you can't. But there also will be a large group somewhere in the middle. They will require closer examination before you can make a decision.

Evaluating a candidate involves identifying strengths and weaknesses and comparing them to the selection criteria of the job. Obviously, there is no such thing as the "perfect" candidate, but some candidates will be closer to the ideal than others.

When reviewing a candidate's strengths, first separate those that relate to the job from those that do not. Give more weight to strengths that are job related. For example, a candidate for a research position might be personable and outgoing, but might not possess strong analytical skills. Certainly the lack of analytical skills, which are essential for the job, would be a major factor in your decision.

Pinpointing a candidate's weaknesses can be even more difficult than identifying

strengths. Focus in on weaknesses that would limit a candidate's performance on the job. For example, a candidate who did poorly in a technical subject would probably have a performance problem in a position requiring the same technical skills. Keep in mind that some candidate behaviors such as nervousness, lack of confidence, or trouble in communicating an idea may be caused by interview stress. You must decide if the candidate's behavior actually indicates a weakness.



Evaluating the Candidate

What approach should you use in making a decision to recommend or not recommend a candidate? Ask yourself these questions:

1. Was the candidate prepared for the interview?

2. How clear and complete were the candidate's answers?

3. What strengths did the candidate present that would lead to job success? What evidence was given to support the existence of these strengths?

4. What weaknesses would hinder the candidate's job performance? What evidence is there to support the existence of these weaknesses?

5. Would the candidate be successful in the job? Fit in well with coworkers?

Remember, if you have any questions or doubts, either do not recommend the candidate or discuss your evaluation with other recruiters.

Completing the Evaluation Form

Most interview evaluation forms allow you to rate a candidate and write comments. Rating scales are used to evaluate the candidate in general as well as specific qualities such as communication or leadership skills. A rating scale provides a numerical system of measurement which is easily understood. Written comments can then be used to explain your numerical ratings. These comments should be based on the brief notes taken during the interview and should support your decision to recommend or not recommend the candidate.

Mistakes to Avoid

A number of common mistakes are made by interviewers when completing their evaluation forms. Be sure to avoid the following:

1. Unclear comments. Avoid comments like "o.k." or "average." These types of comments don't offer any insight into the candidate. While it isn't necessary to write lengthy evaluations, details are essential to give a true picture of the candidate's abilities and skills.

2. Blank areas on forms. Be complete when filling out the evaluation form. Blank areas could mean you did not cover all the topics during the interview.

3. Inconsistent ratings and comments. Don't give a candidate a low rating and then write glowing comments. Your comments should be in line with your numerical ratings.

CERTAIN ACTIONS CAN REDUCE SELECTION ERRORS.

4. Unreadable handwriting. Since your completed evaluation form will be reviewed by others, your handwriting must be legible.

Remember, it is just as important to thoroughly complete evaluation forms for candidates you don't recommend as for ones that you do.

The Form

Many different types of evaluation forms exist. Here is one sample for a campus interview.

Sample Campus Interview Evaluation

Student's Name_____

Major_____

University/College_____

Interview Date_____

Rate the candidate using the scale of 1-5 (with 5 being poor and 1 being outstanding) and support your rating with comments in the space provided.

1. KNOWLEDGE/APTITUDE
   (relevant academic courses, seminars, projects; understanding of concepts)

   1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:_____

   _____

(Continued)

2. WORK EXPERIENCE
(candidate's involvement in work that is similar to first job assignment)

1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

_____

3. MOTIVATION
(career goals, interest in the job, energy level, reasons for applying)

1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

_____

4. ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS
(memberships and/or offices held in college or community activities, hobbies)

1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

_____

5. PERSONAL QUALITIES
(enthusiasm, communication skills, poise, maturity, personality)

1 2 3 4 5

Comments: _____

_____

OVERALL RATING OF THE CANDIDATE

1 2 3 4 5

(Continued)

POTENTIAL FOR ADVANCEMENT

1 2 3 4 5

Recommend for hire_____
Recommend for further consideration_____

Do not recommend_____

Comments:_____

_____

Interviewer_____

5

Polishing Your Skills

Taking the Chance Out of Selection Interviewing*

There are certain things you can do to reduce selection errors:

1. Use a structured guide for interviews. The guide can include a step-by-step format and important topics or questions to cover. Structured interviews decrease the number of interviewer errors.

2. Know the requirements of the job. Each interviewer should know what a position entails and what its requirements are. This knowledge helps you to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information.

3. Acquire interviewer training. Interviewer errors can be reduced or eliminated with practice and training. One valuable training method is to tape record or videotape an employment interview and then evaluate the interviewer's performance.

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*Adapted from "Taking the Chance Out of Selection Interviewing" by George E. Stevens, Journal of College Placement, Winter 1981, 46-47.

4. Refine the ability to recognize, explore, understand, and interpret varied behavior patterns. Integrating candidate information and your impressions is essential for understanding the individual.

5. Look for nonverbal cues. Increase your awareness of your own and the candidate's nonverbal behavior. Assurance, comfort, and composure can be displayed with body language. Hostility, anger, resentment, and embarrassment can also be clearly transmitted. The very structure of interviewing arrangements can serve as a nonverbal message. If the interviewer and the candidate are always separated by a 30-inch desk, a desire to keep a respectful distance may be indicated. In addition, interviewers may communicate a lack of concern by not smiling or making any effort to put the other person at ease.

6. Prepare the candidate for topics that may create anxiety. Conversely, if you can help candidates extricate themselves from awkward situations, do so. People appreciate having others show insight into their dilemmas. Good interviewers accept the obligation of protecting the candidate from loss of esteem or from embarrassment.

7. Make smooth conversational transitions from one topic to another, from one level of inquiry to another, and from one degree of significance to another. Adequate preparation is required in switching a discussion from the unimportant to the serious. How a question is worded is also important. The question "Why did you leave these two positions?" might be changed to "Could

we now talk about your reasons for leaving a couple of these positions?"

8. Learn to quickly and accurately track the emotional, conversational, and factual changes taking place. The interview is a dynamic process. Several changes take place in a short period of time. These types of changes provide some of the best data on how candidates are feeling, how they handle themselves, and how the interviewer's behavior may be influencing candidates and vice versa. Track behavior in the same way that radar scans a series of objects.

9. Try to improve your ability to interview people who have difficulty in interview situations or in responding to a series of questions. If you can accomplish this, you may locate an exceptional employee.

10. Increase sensitivity to projected needs. If, for example, you give the impression that you are seeking answers that agree with your own, those are the answers you are likely to get. Interviewees are often alert to hidden agendas, that is, the things the interviewer appears to want to hear. This is particularly true with many sophisticated, "experienced" candidates who try to "read" the interviewer. If you are an inexperienced interviewer, you may be unaware of your signals that encourage interviewees to behave or respond in certain ways.

11. Remember possible legal constraints associated with selection procedures used in the interview. Keep in mind that the selection technique used should be reliable and valid. Interviewers may be called upon to explain

procedures used and to demonstrate that acceptable levels of reliability and validity were found. Also, be sure to follow EEOC guidelines when questioning the candidate.

Eight Ways to Polish Your Interview Skills

Interviewing is a skill that can be learned and improved. Choose from these eight ways to polish your skills. Make a commitment to your professional future today.

1. Practice, practice, and more practice. Tape your interviews--video works best but audio tape is a good alternative.

2. Meet with company officials to gather more information on job specifications.

3. Review this manual before your next interview schedule.

4. Use "Interviewer Self-Checklist" after an interview schedule.

5. Solicit feedback from career planning and placement staff regarding interviews.

6. Attend workshops on interviewing, communications, and decision making.

7. Read books and articles on interviewing (see bibliography).

8. Observe other interviewers in action.

EXERCISE VIII: INTERVIEWER SELF-CHECKLIST

Directions: After your first interview schedule, ask yourself the following questions:

	Yes	No
1. Did I control the interview?	_____	_____
2. Was I objective?	_____	_____
3. Did I establish rapport with the candidates quickly?	_____	_____
4. Did I ask questions in a logical order?	_____	_____
5. Did I give the candidates an opportunity to present their strengths?	_____	_____
6. Did my questions elicit the type of information needed to make good decisions?	_____	_____
7. Did I cue the candidates by my responses or my nonverbal behavior?	_____	_____
8. Did I effectively listen to the candidates' responses?	_____	_____
9. What other questions could I have asked?	_____	_____
10. Did I go a good job in selling my company?	_____	_____
11. Was I able to accurately evaluate the candidates?	_____	_____

12. Did I complete each phase of the interview? _____ _____

13. Were my transitions from one step to the next smooth? _____ _____

14. How have I improved my interviewing skills? _____ _____

15. Where do I need additional work?

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